



# EVACUATION



California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

**Evacuations save lives, and allow  
responding personnel to focus on the emergency at hand.  
PLEASE EVACUATE PROMPTLY WHEN REQUESTED!**

## Evacuation Orders

The terms **Voluntary** and **Mandatory** are used to describe evacuation orders. However, local jurisdictions may use other terminology such as *Precautionary* and *Immediate Threat*. These terms are used to alert you to the significance of the danger. ALL evacuation instructions provided by officials should be followed immediately for your safety.

## Long Before A Fire Threatens

### Create and Maintain:

- A Defensible Space around your home and other structures on your property.
- Be involved in fire safe planning in your community.

### Prepare an **Evacuation Checklist** and Organize:

- Critical medications.
  - Important personal papers, photos.
  - Essential valuables.
  - Pet and livestock transport, limited amount of pet food.
  - Change of clothing, toiletries.
  - Cell phone.
  - Critical papers and effects in a fire-proof safe.
  - An Evacuation Route Map with at least two routes.\*
  - Drive your planned route of escape before an actual emergency.\*
- \*During an evacuation law enforcement/ emergency personnel may determine your route.*

## The Law

Whenever a menace to the public health or safety is created by a calamity such as flood, storm, fire, earthquake, explosion, accident, or other disaster, officers of the law may close the area where the menace exists. [Penal Code 409.5 (a)]

Any unauthorized person who willfully and knowingly enters an area that has been closed and who willfully remains within the area after receiving notice to evacuate or leave shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. [Penal Code 409.5 (c)]

## If Evacuation Is A Possibility

- Locate your **Evacuation Checklist** and assemble the items on it. **PLACE THEM IN YOUR VEHICLE.**
- Park your vehicle facing outward and carry your car keys with you.
- Locate your pets and keep them nearby.
- Prepare farm animals for transport.
- Place connected garden hoses and buckets full of water around the house.
- Assemble fire fighting tools near an outside door (shovel, rake, hoe).
- Move propane BBQ appliances away from structures.
- Cover-up. Wear long pants, long sleeve shirt, heavy shoes/boots, cap, dry bandanna for face cover, goggles or glasses. 100% cotton clothing is preferable.
- Leave lights on in the house - door unlocked.
- Leave windows closed - air conditioning off.

# The Evacuation Process

- \* Officials will determine the areas to be evacuated and the routes to use depending upon the fire's location, behavior, winds, terrain, etc.
- \* Law enforcement agencies are typically responsible for enforcing an evacuation order. Follow their directions promptly!
- \* You will be advised of potential evacuations as early as possible. **You must take the initiative to stay informed and aware. Listen to your radio/TV and for announcements from law enforcement and emergency personnel.**
- \* You may be directed to temporary assembly areas to await transfer to a safe location.
- \* When heavy smoke reduces visibility, movement may be restricted only to escorted convoys.

## Returning Home

**Fire officials will determine when it is safe for you to return to your home. This will be done as soon as possible considering safety and accessibility.**

When you do return home:

- Be alert for downed power lines and other hazards.
- Check propane tanks, regulators, and lines before turning gas on.
- Check your residence carefully for hidden embers or smoldering fires.

## If You Become Trapped

### While in your vehicle:

- Stay calm.
- Park your vehicle in an area clear of vegetation.
- Close all vehicle windows and vents.
- Cover yourself with wool blanket or jacket.
- Lie on vehicle floor.
- Use your cell phone to advise officials – 911.

### While on foot:

- Stay calm.
- Go to an area clear of vegetation, a ditch or depression if possible.
- Lie face down, cover up.
- Use your cell phone to advise officials - 911.

### While in your home:

- Stay calm, keep your family together.
- Call 911 and inform authorities of your location.
- Fill sinks and tubs with cold water.
- Keep doors and windows closed, but UNLOCKED.
- Stay inside your house.
- Stay away from outside walls and windows.
- Note – it will get hot in the house, but it is much hotter, and more dangerous outside.

### After the fire passes, and if it is safe, check the following areas for fire:

- The roof and house exterior.
- Under decks and inside your attic.
- Your yard for burning trees, woodpiles, etc.